

Promoting Let-down and Milk Flow



“Let-down” occurs when the milk releases and generously flows from the breast, stimulated by the hormone oxytocin. It usually occurs about 2-3 minutes after the start of breastfeeding or pumping. The “let-down” might not occur easily if you are worried or stressed. Try these suggestions to let the milk flow.

Promote relaxation

- Take a warm shower or bath prior to breastfeeding.
- If you are in any pain, take Advil, Tylenol, or Paracetamol about 30 minutes before you expect to breastfeed. Pain can cause stress and inhibit let-down.
- Set up a “nursing nook” where you always go to breastfeed or pump that is quiet and without distraction. Have a comfy chair, pillows, footstool, soothing music, warm drinks easily available.
- Take several deep breaths and close your eyes before you begin.
- Visualization:
 - Imagine the beach or other relaxing places: Use all five senses; imagine the sights, smells such as the salt air, sensations such of the sand under you or the warmth of the sun on your skin, imagine tastes and what you might hear.
 - Try to visualize and “feel” what the let-down response feels like.
 - Imagine your milk flowing or use images of waterfalls or a river of milk.
 - Think of your baby’s soft little hand moving at your breast
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin.
- Get in a warm bath with baby and nurse there.
- Singing or humming can speed let-down.
- Distract yourself: watch TV, talk on the phone, read a book, etc.
- Place a heating pad or warm herb pack on your shoulders and/or across your breasts.

- Have a helper massage your back and shoulders before and while you nurse with aromatic massage oil.
- Switch nurse: move baby back and forth frequently between breasts.

Nipple stimulation to release oxytocin

One minute of moist heat, massage, nipple rolls and gentle tugging will trigger a let-down. Rest two minutes, then pump or feed your baby.

Reverse Pressure Softening:

Apply direct pressure on the areola with your fingertips as shown in the pictures.



Herbals and medications

- Drink red raspberry tea;
- Syntocinon nose spray (requires a prescription from your doctor): 40 units/ml. Spray 1-2 sprays per nostril 5-10 before feeding or pumping. Additional sprays may be used during the feeding or pumping session.

Breast massage

- Helper stands behind mom using non-scented lotion or massage oil.
- Apply warm compresses to the breasts.
- Start the massage under the arm.
- Work tips of fingers in circles around the breast clockwise.
- Gently and gradually apply pressure to stubborn areas.
- Apply breast compression periodically
- Read our handout “Breast



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